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### **From Abraham to Schweitzer? [Review of Rock of Ages? The Changing Faces of the Christian God by John Butler]**

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### **FROM ABRAHAM TO SCHWEITZER?**

John Butler, *Rock of Ages? The Changing Faces of the Christian God* (Cambridge, Lutterworth, 2013. £20. pp. 235. ISBN: 978-0-7188-9296-8).

Venturing well beyond his disciplinary expertise, John Butler here offers a cogent layman's account of the development of the Christian idea of God. In the course of twenty-four concise chapters he progresses through biblical, medieval, Reformation, Enlightenment and twentieth-century images of God, emphasizing variety rather than continuity or development. In the final chapters the author's liberal Protestant leanings come to the fore, with Rudolf Bultmann, Paul Tillich and Albert Schweitzer included but comparable Catholic figures like Karl Rahner or Henri de Lubac, or more popularly, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, omitted. Furthermore, intellectual developments in major Christian centres such as Constantinople, Moscow and Baghdad occurring later than the fifth century are totally ignored. Bizarrely, however, the Jewish Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel is included. Such Western-centric accounts of Christian theological history are impoverished and need challenging, especially given the abundance of materials now available in English to aid refocus. Most readers will discover things here that they did not know, such as the helpful sketches of the nineteenth century theologians Charles Hodge and Abraham Kuyper. Nevertheless, the absence of referencing means that this book, while serviceable for a discussion group or the general reader, will not satisfy the researcher and is unsuitable for teaching.

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